

## ABSTRACT

An apparatus, system and method for monitoring calls that have been forwarded to a network-based voice mail system (VMS). The VMS receives the forwarded call and sends a start of greeting signal at the beginning and an end of greeting signal at the completion of the voice message greeting to the central office switch. The switch sends an activate call monitoring data message and a call monitoring alert signal to the customer premises equipment (CPE). If the CPE is adapted for call monitoring and includes a speaker assembly, then the speaker assembly is engaged in response to the activate call monitoring data message, thereby allowing hands-free call monitoring. If the CPE does not include a speaker assembly, then the called party may activate call monitoring by lifting the handset in response to detecting a call monitoring alert from the CPE. While monitoring the call, the called party may intercept the call to speak with the calling party.

15 Kilpatrick Stockton # 36968/263531  
BellSouth # 01306

J

10026394-23101  
FOI b7E b7C